fallen syndicate

PRESENTS

the demon prince of the momochi house

BY SHOUOTO AYA

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百千さん家のあやかし王子

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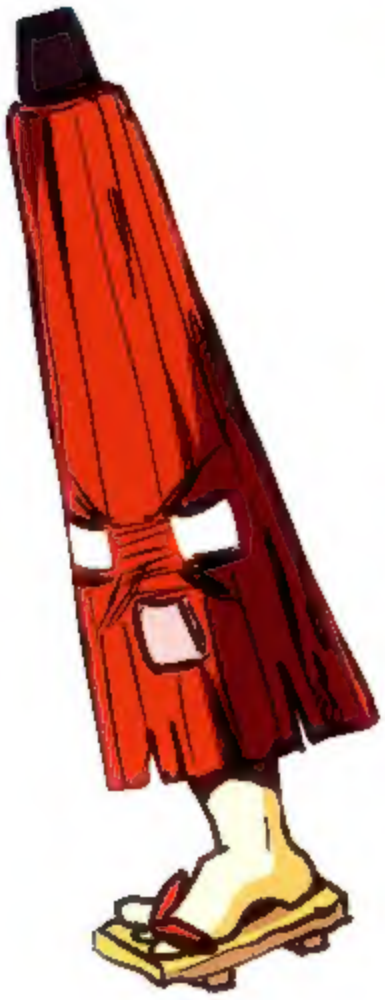

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CHAPTER
16
BUBBLES
OF TIME
-PART 1-

百千さんの家のあやかし王子

硝音あや

百千さん家の奇妙な人々

七守葵

7歳の時に百千家に迷い込み「御守様」に「指名」された。「お役目」がある時は鵺に変身する。しかし、それは本来ひまりの役割だったはずらしいのだが…。

御守様【鵺】

耳は猫、背には鳥の羽。そして狐の尾を持つ異形のあやかし。鵺は百千家の守り主「御守様」として、異界から溢れ出てくるあやかしを退治している。

伊勢

御守様の式神。正体は猩々。

紫

御守様の式神。正体は水蛇。

百千ひまり

遺言状に従い百千家を相続した天涯孤独な16歳。百千家の正統な主のため、百千家からあらゆるものを強制的に「出て行かせる」能力がある。

小妖怪たち

百千さん家のもも

これまでのおはなし

百千家や先住民についてまだまだ知らないことだらけのひまりの前に、唯一、葵の事をかすかに覚えていた日高隼が現われる。彼はなんと葵の幼なじみだった。しかし日高の家は、〝管狐〟のせいで呪われており、ひまりはその〝呪い〟に苦しむ彼を助けようとするが、〝管狐〟の怒りに触れピンチに！

間一髪のところで鵺に助けてもらい事無きを得る。そのおかげで、日高は〝呪い〟から解放されたものの、幼き頃の葵との思い出もすべて忘れてしまった…。

鵺からお仕置きを受けた〝管狐〟は、兄弟仲良く百千家に越して来ることに。その〝管狐〟の長兄〝玉萌〟が新しく百千家の一員になるが、火車が置いていった心に秘めた事を話してしまう〝箱〟のせいで、百千家はひと波乱。

何とか平穏な日々を取り戻したと思った矢先、紫から衝撃の一言が――…!?

LAZE

HO-OT...

flap

flap

IT'S SO HOT...

LAZE

Your outfit isn't helping with the heat!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S MAKING IT WORSE!

WHAT'S THAT?!

So hot

STOP SAYING IT'S HOT! YOU'RE MAKING IT HOTTER THAN IT ALREADY IS!

TENSE

fluffy

WHY HAS ZUSHI CHANGED INTO HIS HUMAN FORM?

THE FEATHERS OF MY AYAKASHI FORM ARE TOO HOT!

fluffy

Of course, we don't have air conditioning or fans in the Momochi House.

It's summer.

ALMOND JELLY!!

Lord Yukari-

OH!! AS EXPECTED OF YUKARI! HOW THOUGHT-FUL!

I'VE BROUGHT YOU SOME-THING COLD TO EAT.

LOOK AT ALL OF YOU LAZING ABOUT.

YUKARI DOESN'T SEEM TO FEEL THE HEAT AT ALL.

I'm digging in~

BEING A WATER AYAKASHI, I'M NATURALLY STRONG AGAINST HEAT.

IT'S ALL IN THE MIND... OR SO I'D LIKE TO SAY.

When I was a human,

as punishment, I was "devoured" and became an ayakashi.

Back then...

YUKARI...!

It's GOOd...

EAT

THAT MAKES SENSE...

SFX SLIDE

HUMANS TURNING INTO AYAKASHI... I WONDER...

I'll curse you!!!

YAWN

...Tamamo woke up and the conversation was interrupted.

I WANT TO KNOW MORE, BUT IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO BRING IT UP

TAKE US SOMEWHERE COOL!!!

HUH?

AOI!!

WHAT'S EVERYONE EATING? THAT LOOKS DELICIOUS.

HUH? WHAT?!

YOU GOTTA HELP US!!

PLEASE!

"BACK DOOR"?

HMM, I WONDER IF IT'S OKAY TO USE IT FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS...

EH...

WAIT, DO YOU MEAN THE "BACK DOOR"?

IF AOI WOULD JUST USE THAT, WE CAN GET THERE EASILY! THE PLACE BY THE WATER!

LORD AOI!! PLEASE!!!

THIS SLIDING DOOR IS WHAT WE CALL THE "BACK DOOR".

TH S IS H.MARI'S F RST TIME, ISN'T IT?

AMONG ALL THE MYSTERIOUS ROOMS IN THE MOMOCHI HOUSE, THIS SLIDING DOOR IS PRETTY SPECIAL.

IT'S CONNECTED TO THE SPIRIT WORLD, WHERE MANY AYAKASHI LIVE.

...

IT'S GOOD TO TAKE A BREAK ONCE IN A WHILE, AOI.

PLEASE WAIT. BEFORE YOU LEAVE, I'LL PREPARE US SOME LUNCH.

EVEN YUKARI ...

I GUESS I HAVE NO CHOICE.

WHY DON'T WE TAKE A LITTLE TRIP OUT THERE?

!

The world where the ayakashi live...

So Aoi can step out of the Momochi House this way.

I'M OPENING THE DOOR.

SFX WHOOSH

SFX: OPEN

SHALL WE?

Hyo...

PAT

SPIRIT WORLD ...

AGAIN?

THAT'S WHY YOU GOTTA WEAR THIS HAT!

WE'RE HERE!!

This is on a different scale from when I was lured into the room by that old cherry blossom tree!

WOW... WHERE IS THIS PLACE?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL SCARED.

EVEN IF IT'S THE SPIRIT WORLD, THIS DOOR ONLY CONNECTS TO PLACES JUST AS SAFE AS OUR BACK GARDEN.

ONLY THE HANDLE IS LEFT...

Close

*T/N THE PHRASE THEY USE HERE TRANSLATES TO "POTATOES BEING WASHED" A PHRASE USED TO DESCCRIBE A LARGE CROWD, ESPECIALLY AT POOLS OR BEACHES

"It's too packed!" (*)

WHAT'S WITH THE CROWD OF AYAKASHI?

AT THIS RATE, IT'LL GET EVEN MORE STUFFY!

EVEN THE AYAKASHI ARE HARM-LESS—

...WAIT, HUH?

SFX CROWDED

Whisper

WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE...

THIS PLACE WASN'T THIS CROWDED THE LAST TIME I CAME...

I'VE GOT A LITTLE-KNOWN SPOT IN MIND.

WELL, THEN... SHALL WE LOOK FOR A DIFFER-ENT SPOT?

YOU'RE RIGHT ...

MAN, THIS SUCKS! JUST WHEN WE DECIDED TO TAKE A BREAK!

.....

THIS IS TROU-BLING ...

THAT JUST LEAVES THIS ROOM FOR US TO PLAY!

THE LAKES HAVE BECOME DIRTY RE-CENTLY...

IT SURE IS A 'LITTLE'...

...THE HECK? ISN'T THIS JUST THE *MOMOCHI* WELL?

Ta— da!

THIS IS IT.

SFX FALL

SFX PUSH

WHA-

LET'S FIND OUT!

AHHH!

WHAT A BEALITIFUL WATER-FALL...!

SPLASH

YOU'RE RIGHT!

IT'S SO COOL AND REFRESH-ING....

I feel alive again!

IT'S SO REFRESHING.

WHEW— THE WATER'S PRETTY COLD.

YEAH, I DON'T WANT TO GET MY CLOTHES ALL WET.

ARE YOU SURE?

WELL, THEN, I GUESS I'LL HELP YUKARI WITH LUNCH PREPARATIONS.

splash

AOI, YOU'RE NOT JOINING US?

RIGHT?

GOOD THINKING. IF YOU GET CAUGHT UP IN THAT, YOU'RE GOING TO GET SOAKED.

YEAH, IT'S SO COOL HERE THAT I THOUGHT I COULD FINALLY FINISH THIS BOOK.

Finally...

I FINALLY GET TO GO OUTSIDE WITH AOI.

EVEN FOR A LITTLE BIT, I KIND OF WANT TO BE BY HIS SIDE.

THIS SPRING ISN'T POPULAR AMONG THE AYAKASHI,

WITH IT BEING CALLED THE "DEVOURING SWAMP", AFTER ALL.

WHAT A GREAT SPOT YOU'VE BROUGHT US TO! IT'S AS IF WE OWN THE PLACE.

THAT'S LORD YUKARI FOR YOU!

Lily Shock

you aren't even human so why are you scared?

OH— SO THIS IS WHERE YUKARI WAS...

YES.

SFX COUGH

AFTER TURNING INTO AN AYAKASHI, I WAS GIVEN THIS SPRING

THIS IS ONE OF THE DRAGON LORD'S HOLY WATERFALLS

WHEN YUKARI WAS

TURNED INTO AN AYAKASHI...

SO THIS WAS WHERE YOU LIVED?!

AWAE, YOU'RE CUTE

SINCE I DO HAVE LODGINGS FOR WHEN I'M IN MY HUMAN FORM

NOT QUITE

ON TOP OF HAVING A SCARY NICKNAME,

IT'S RATHER SMALL SO OTHER AYAKASHI RARELY COMES BY

STILL THE WATER'S VERY CLEAR

THE WATER IN THE MUMUCHI HOUSE AND THE WELL IS DRAWN FROM THIS SPRING

!?

IT- IT WASN'T ME! I CAN'T EVEN PEE THIS MUCH!

UGH!!! TAMAMO PEED IN THE WATER!

THAT MEANS WE'VE BEEN BENEFITING FROM THE WATER HERE.

WAIT ...!

HANG ON A SECOND!

ISE, THAT'S A LITTLE...

YOU'RE SUCH A KID...

IT'S SPREAD- ING.

THE COLOR OF THE WATER IS STRANGE...

EVERYONE. GET OUT OF THE WATER THIS INSTANT!!!

"POISON", HUH...

IT SEEMS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE SPRING...

POISONOUS WATER THAT WILL ROT AN AYAKASHI'S BODY—

POLLUTED WATER?

...NO,

I DON'T THINK IT'S ONLY YUKARI'S SPRING THAT'S AFFECTED...

WHAT ON EARTH IS HAPPENING TO YUKARI'S SPRING...

.....

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT WHAT THE OTHER AYAKASHI SAID BACK THERE AT THE POOLS, ABOUT THE WATER GETTING DIRTY.

JUST LIKE THIS SPRING, PERHAPS THE OTHER PLACES ARE EXPERIENCING THE SAME THING?

IF THERE'S POLLUTION,

IT MEANS SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO THE DRAGON LORD HIMSELF.

MOST OF THE WATER THAT FLOWS THROUGH THE SPIRIT WORLD COMES FROM THE DRAGON LORD'S HOLY WATERFALLS,

AND THOSE SACRED SPOTS ARE SCATTERED AROUND THE HUMAN WORLD AS WELL AS THE SPIRIT WORLD.

THE DRAGON LORD ALWAYS KEEPS THEM FLOWING AND NEVER FAILS TO PROVIDE FRESH WATER.

WELL, THOUGH MY AYAKASHI SELF HOLDS HIM IN HIGH REGARD,

WHEN I WAS HUMAN, I THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS A SERVANT OF THE DRAGON LORD.

THE DRAGON LORD WAS LIKE A MASTER TO YUKARI, WASN'T HE?

THAT MAKES ME WORRY.

THAT'S RIGHT.

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I RETURN TO THIS SPRING, I HAVE YET TO MEET HIM AGAIN.

WAS THAT EVER SINCE YOU CAME TO THE MOMOCHI HOUSE?

BUT IN REALITY,

I HAVE NOT SEEN HIM IN A VERY LONG TIME.

IT'S A SIGN OF THE DRAGON LORD'S ANGER.

THAT'S WHY, EVEN I'M NOT SO SURE OF THE REASON FOR THIS DIRTY WATER...

WHAT THE HELL...

WE ARE THE AYAKASHI WHO LIVE IN THESE PARTS.

appear

HAS BEEN GONE A LONG TIME, AND THAT GREATLY ANGERED THE DRAGON LORD.

THE WATER SERPENT IN CHARGE OF PROTECTING THESE RIVERS AND LAKES

THE RIVERS IN THIS AREA HAVE BEEN DIRTIED, AND IT'S HARD FOR US TO SURVIVE.

IT IS A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL THIS SPRING IS POLLUTED AS WELL.

I'M SERVING AT THE MOMOCHI HOUSE UNDER THE DRAGON LORD'S ORDERS.

THEN WHY HASN'T THE DRAGON LORD APPEARED AT ALL?

I AM NOT NEGLECTING MY DUTIES OF PROTECTING THESE WATERS.

LET ME SAY THIS AGAIN.

...

AFTER ALL, A "DEVOURED" HUMAN CANNOT POSSIBLY KNOW OF THE DRAGON LORD'S NOBLE ACTIONS

THE FACT THAT YOU CAN NO LONGER CONVENE WITH THE DRAGON LORD IS THE PROOF THAT YOU HAVE INCURRED HIS WRATH

...

IT SEEMS LIKE THE BEST WAY IS TO SUMMON THE DRAGON LORD AND HAVE HIM VISIT THIS PLACE...

I KNOW YOU ARE FACING DIFFICULTIES, BUT, I THINK YOU SHOULD FOCUS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLLUTION INSTEAD.

ISE.

DON'T GO RUNNING OFF YOUR MOUTHS!

"SACRIFICE"?

BUT DURING THE SUMMONING CEREMONY THE SACRIFICE CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE DRAGON LORD.

WE AYAKASHI CANNOT HEAR THE DRAGON LORD'S WORDS DIRECTLY.

THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU'LL NEED A SACRIFICE...

A SACRIFICE.

THAT WATER SERPENT WAS ONCE A HUMAN

OFFERED AS A SACRIFICE TO THE DRAGON LORD.

EVERYBODY CALM DOWN! I'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY TO SAVE THIS

RIGHT

RIGHT

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, LET'S GO CATCH US A HUMAN.

THE DRAGON LORD ONLY ACCEPTS HUMAN SACRIFICES

THERE IS A HUMAN AMONG US...

A HUMAN...!

HIMARI ...!

WHAT GOOD TIMING!

WE'LL USE THIS GIRL AS THE SACRI-FICE...

I WON'T ALLOW THAT ...!!

SLIP

I'LL BE THE SACRIFICE.

SHE IS AN IMPORTANT PERSON OF MOMOCHI LINEAGE,

AND AS A SERVANT OF THE DRAGON LORD AND THE MOMOCHI HOUSE, I WILL NOT ALLOW HER TO FACE SUCH DANGER.

SACRI-FICE!

HU-MAN

BUT

SFX COMMOTION

AND IT SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN SO LIGHTLY.

THIS IS A HIGHLY DANGEROUS CEREMONY WHERE THE SACRIFICE OFFERS THEIR SOUL TO THE DRAGON LORD,

YOU, TOO, HIMARI.

Collapse

NH

YUKA RI!!

YUKARI?! YOU DON'T LOOK SO...

I'LL FIND A WAY... TO SPEAK TO THE DRAGON LORD...

SHUT

YUKA-RI!!

AOI...

THE SPRING IS THE SOURCE OF YUKARI'S SPIRIT POWERS, IN OTHER WORDS, HIS VERY LIFE.

SINCE IT HAS BEEN POLLUTED, YUKARI'S OWN BODY HAS WEAKENED AS WELL.

I'VE DECIDED ON BECOMING THE SACRIFICE.

I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE YUKARI SUFFER ANY LONGER.

NO.

YUKARI SAID IT HIMSELF. THE DRAGON LORD IS A POWERFUL AYAKASHI.

HUMANS CAN'T REASON WITH HIM. IT'S DANGEROUS.

AND TO HUMANS, IT IS LIKE A DARKNESS THAT YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY FATHOM.

WE HAVE OUR OWN LOGIC,

EVEN IF YOU'RE LIVING AMONG AYAKASHI IN THE MOMOCHI HOUSE, FREELY ENTERING THE SPIRIT WORLD, YOU MUST NOT THINK LIGHTLY OF AYAKASHI.

ARE WE CLEAR?

.....

EVEN SO, I KNOW THAT YUKARI HAS LIVED AND SUFFERED BETWEEN THESE TWO WORLDS.

IT'S A WORLD WHERE HUMANS CANNOT TREAD.

IT'S CALM AND SERENE, BUT IT FEELS SO LONELY...

WITHOUT ANY VISITORS, YUKARI HAD ALWAYS LIVED ALONE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.

We don't know the Dragon Lord's true intention.

THIS IS WHERE YUKARI LIVED ALONE.

THEN, ONE DAY,

I WANT TO BELIEVE IN THE DRAGON LORD. I WANT TO TRY TO SPEAK WITH HIM.

HE WAS FINALLY TOLD TO GO TO THE MOMOCHI HOUSE.

PLEASE UNDER-STAND, AOI...!

WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE THIS AS IT IS.

WE HAVE TO DO SOME-THING BEFORE THE POLLUTION SPREADS.

I KNOW. I KNOW...

BUT...

DA-THUMP

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE IN DANGER,

GOT IT, HIMARI?

YOU HAVE TO UNDER-STAND MY FEELINGS, TOO.

I DON'T WANT TO PUT YOU IN DANGER.

hold

EVEN IF I'M UP AGAINST THE DRAGON LORD,

I'LL EXORCISE HIM.

AOI...

THANK YOU, AOI...

JUST PROMISE ME YOU WON'T DO ANYTHING FOOLISH.

AND SO I SUMMON THEE.

HERE IS YOUR SACRI-FICE!

HE, WHO DWELLS IN THE DEPTHS OF THIS WORLD,

O' DRAGON KING!

THE SOURCE OF THE SEVEN GREAT FALLS, COME FORTH THROUGH THE WATER,

DON'T MESS THIS UP, HIMARI...

BECAUSE OF THE POLLUTED WATER, I CAN'T GET ANY CLOSER.

SFX APPEAR

DR—

open

SFX. ROAR

THE DRAGON LORD...

ガオオオオ

SFX: ROAR

THIS...

WON'T END WELL ...

SO BLACK ...

THE DRAGON LORD HAS BECOME A VENGEFUL SPIRIT BECAUSE OF THE POLLUTED WATERS.

IN THIS STATE...

YOUR WORDS CAN'T REACH HIM LIKE THIS!

STAY BACK, HIMARI!!!

PLEASE...! DRAGON LORD!

PLEASE LISTEN TO ME...!

VENGE-FUL SPIRIT...

THE BEAUTI-FUL DRAGON LORD HAS...

THIS CAN'T BE...

DRAGON LORD!!

Some-thing is...

Something shiny...

crawl

PLEASE... PLEASE WAIT...

I'LL EXORCISE HIM!

SFX: ROAR

SFX: SWOOSH

Nue!

HIMARI ...!!!

完

百千あやかし家の王子

Aya Otoguchi

百千さんちのあやかし王子

Aya no Ouji to Momochi-san